

**NAME:** MINASSIAN, Alek  
**MR#:** [REDACTED]  
**D.O.B.:** November 3, 1992  
**WARD:** M3A

## **Forensic Social Work Assessment**

**Date of Admission:** July 30, 2018  
**Birthplace:** Toronto, ON  
**First Language:** English  
**Address:** No fixed address  
**Phone:** Not available  
**Next of Kin:** [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] (Vic) Minassian (parents)  
**Address:** [REDACTED]  
**Phone:** [REDACTED]  
**Marital Status:** Single  
**Source of Income:** No income  
**Treatment Capacity:** Capable  
**Financial Capacity:** Capable

### **Charge:**

- First Degree Murder, contrary to Section 231(1) of the Criminal Code of Canada (X10)
- Second Degree Murder, contrary to Section 231(1) of the Criminal Code of Canada (X16)

### **Circumstances of Admission to this Facility**

On July 27, 2018, Alek Minassian was ordered to be transferred from the Toronto South Detention Centre to the Forensic Psychiatry Program at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton an in-custody protected assessment (a Lesage Order). He was to return to the custody of the detention centre no later than September 29, 2018.

### **Sources of Information**

1. Interviews with Alek Minassian
2. Interviews with [REDACTED] Minassian (brother) and [REDACTED] Minassian (parents) on August 8, 2018 and September 4, 2018
3. Written responses to questions provided by [REDACTED] Minassian on August 29, 2018
4. Order Remanding Alek Minassian for an In-Custody Defence Psychiatric Assessment, dated July 27, 2018

5. Health Records from Dr. Debra Birnbaum, family physician, 2010-2017
6. Health records from Dr. Gerald Friedman, pediatrician, 2010 and 2011
7. Health records from Markham Stouffville Hospital, 1997

### **Circumstances Prior to Admission to this Facility**

Mr. Minassian had just completed all requirements for a diploma in computer science at Seneca College in the spring. He accepted a new full-time job that was to start seven days after the index offence, at a software development company named Ceridian. His father reported that on the morning of the incident, everything seemed ordinary and that his son was on the Ceridian website to complete the direct deposit application. His father then drove him downtown Toronto at his request and dropped him off at a coffee shop.

### **Circumstances of Index Offence**

The Crown Synopsis was not available for this Lesage assessment.

### **Personal and Developmental History**

Mr. Minassian was born in Toronto to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Minassian in 1992. He has an older brother named [REDACTED], who is 28 years old. His mother reported that she did not smoke, drink, or use any drugs during the pregnancy, which was uneventful and full-term. It was a natural delivery with no complications, and he was just over 7 lbs in weight. Developmental milestones were met as expected with the exception of speech. His mother said that he did not talk in full sentences until around 3½ years old. Mr. Minassian received speech therapy due to significant receptive and expressive concerns. He was described as fairly independent but lacking in social skills. In kindergarten, he required 1:1 support to help with social interactions and his tendency to run from the classroom, which continued between the ages of 4 and 6. He would also dart from home and run to random directions, so extra monitoring was necessary. When he was 5 years old, Mr. Minassian was assessed by a team at the Pediatric Development Assessment Clinic at Markham Stouffville Hospital due to a number of concerns. A working diagnosis of Pervasive Developmental Disorder was provided by Dr. D. O'Leary at that clinic on December 9, 1997.

His parents said that he was a socially awkward child, and he was especially uncomfortable around members of the opposite sex. At restaurants, his parents would need to order for him if the server was a woman. The family spent quite a lot of time together and they engaged in activities as family that required solo effort, such as mountain biking. He had a good friend starting in Grade 2, and when they went to different schools starting in Grade 7, they met up occasionally until drifting apart by Grade 12. He had one remaining friend of several years when he entered college, but they did not see each other often and made no new friends at school.

There were no reports of physical or sexual abuse, neglect, or exposure to family violence. According to his parents, he has always had a gentle and non-confrontational nature.

While Mr. Minassian was growing up, he engaged in several odd behaviours which seemed compulsive, and he also had some odd fixations. For example, when lying down in bed he tended to spit on the wall for several years with no clear reason for it. Between the ages of 6 and 9, he did not like holes in his bread/toast and he would cut it in small pieces to get rid of the holes. For several years he also had an aversion to certain reflective surfaces and at meal times he would ensure that everyone's spoons were facing down. This was similar to his anxiety around encountering parallel mirrors, which project a theoretically infinite number of images of the objects between them. Apparently he had a fear of being trapped between parallel mirrors in washrooms, for example. In these cases he would avert his eyes to prevent seeing this phenomenon.

According to his parents, when he was 23 years old, Mr. Minassian spent excessive amounts of time playing videogames at home, such as the game *Runescape*. At one point he moved his computer in his bedroom so the screen could not be seen from the door, apparently to decrease his family's scrutiny. According to his parents, he lost his first paid job in part because of his continued videogame playing and "surfing the web" on work time.

## **Education**

Mr. Minassian attended an Armenian preschool and then a private Montessori school for junior kindergarten. He went on to attend Doncrest Public School in Richmond Hill for senior kindergarten. He had difficulty following class expectations and social norms, and had difficulty socializing. He often ignored instructions, and he would frequently run out of the classroom and have to be brought back. He was referred to Markham Stouffville Hospital when he was 5 years old due to these concerns. While in Grade 1, he attended the Giant Steps program through York Region, which provides specialized supports for students on the autistic spectrum, with a goal of full integration back in the regular classroom. It took several more years than expected before he was fully integrated at 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue Public School in Richmond Hill. He attended Wyndham Ridge Public School in Richmond Hill for his senior elementary years, and then Thornlea Secondary School in Thornhill for grades 9 to 12. Throughout school up until Grade 12, he required extra support through the special education program. He always did well in math and sciences but he struggled in classes like history or English that required him to extract information and express himself in his own words.

Mr. Minassian was accepted in to the computer security program at Seneca College's York Campus in 2012. He received a letter of accommodation from the disability office. They recommended that he take 3 rather than 5 courses per term, since he would not have the supports that he had while in secondary school. At the end of his first year at Seneca he decided to switch programs, changing instead to computer programming. He failed two non-computer related courses in his final year but did not tell his parents. Mr. Minassian accepted a full-time job in his field in 2016, despite being two credits short of graduation. He was not very motivated and he put in minimal effort into his work, which led to his being fired within the first six months of his employment.

Rather than return to his studies, Mr. Minassian focussed on his physical fitness with a plan to join the Canadian Forces. He voluntarily discharged himself during basic training and returned to school to re-take the two courses that he failed. All requirements for his computer sciences diploma at Seneca College were completed just a few weeks before the index offence.

### **Employment History**

While a student at Seneca College, Mr. Minassian had a part-time job at the school that was related to his program of study. He also completed a co-op term for Seneca at a company named OMERS. From May to October 2016, he was employed full-time with Toogood Financial Services until he was let go due to performance issues. In 2017, Mr. Minassian was accepted as a recruit in the Canadian Armed Forces with plans to be a non-commissioned member of the Canadian Army. He attended one or two weeks of basic military training in St. Jean, Quebec until he voluntarily withdrew because he was unable to keep up with the expected pace of training. Despite knowing that one of the training requirements was to swim in a pool, he did not try to learn to swim during his physical fitness preparation. Seven days after the date of the index offence, he was scheduled to start a new job at a software development company called Ceridian, with a starting salary of \$70,000.

### **Relationship/Marital History**

Mr. Minassian has never had an intimate partner and he has no children or dependents.

### **Criminal Record**

Mr. Minassian has no criminal record.

### **Psychiatric History**

Mr. Minassian was given a working diagnosis of Pervasive Developmental Disorder on December 9, 1997 by Dr. D. O'Leary at Markham Stouffville Hospital through the Pediatric Development Assessment Clinic. He was diagnosed with Tourette syndrome in 2008 and was followed by pediatrician Dr. Gerald Friedman between 2008 and 2012. His tics were treated with clonidine 0.1 mg p.o. q.i.d. in 2010 and .05 mg p.o. b.i.d. in 2012. He was trialed on Abilify 2.5 mg p.o. b.i.d. in 2011, but this was discontinued because he became too sedated. The clonidine was also discontinued because it was deemed to be ineffective.

### **Substance Use**

Mr. Minassian denied ever smoking, drinking, or using street drugs or other substances.

### **Medical History**

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] There is no history of brain injuries or seizures, and there are no known allergies.

### **Family Psychiatric History**

There is no reported history of any mental health concerns in Mr. Minassian's immediate or extended family.

### **Family Substance Abuse History**

No one in Mr. Minassian's immediate or extended family has any reported substance abuse issues.

### **Current Support Systems**

Personal:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Professional: Dr. Debra Birnbaum (family physician)

[REDACTED]

### **Social Work Formulation**

Alek Minassian is a 25 year old single man with no children, who has no source of income. He had been living with his parents in Richmond Hill prior to his arrest for the index offence. On June 30<sup>th</sup>, he was admitted for a protected assessment of his criminal responsibility after being charged with 10 counts of first degree murder and 16 counts of attempted murder. He has past diagnoses of Tourette's syndrome and autism spectrum disorder, but he has no known serious mental illness. Mr. Minassian's family is very supportive and they called several times per week and visited him weekly throughout most of his admission. Unfortunately, he has no other social supports in his network. There is no substance use and he has no criminal history or history of antisocial behaviour. While Mr. Minassian has had many social difficulties, his parents indicated that the index offence was a total shock to them.

### **Social Work Plan**

- (1) Provide support, education and services to Mr. Minassian and his family as needed;
- (2) Assist the clinical team in completing this court ordered assessment;
- (3) Connect and liaise with professional supports in the community to develop a follow-up plan if needed.

Proposed discharge plan:

Mr. Minassian has his next court date on November 1<sup>st</sup> and he will not be released prior to that date. As a result, no discharge plan has been created.

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